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585 178 [184] [114] [624] [648] I have not found the marriage performed by the fianderú and according to the rites of the native religion in any other village, except in the case of the Mbüá of Xapecó already mentioned. In all the other groups it is, at least nowadays, the task of the capitão, the latter in a certain way representing the authorities of the civil registry, or in the places in which there is a post, the official of the Serviço de Proteção aos Índios. In the village of Rio Branco, Alcides is the one who performs marriages at his /78/ house. After asking the woman if she likes the man, and the latter if he likes the woman, he declares them married. He acts, therefore, as a genuine justice of the peace.

595 Bigamy is rare and does not seem to occur among the Ñandéva. In a nucleus of the Kayová village of Dourados, there was a man married to three women at one time; they were not related to one another. Viewed with some reprobation by the community, the bigamous men are usually lazy: the heaviest burdens of the domestic economy fall on the older woman; the younger one, the privileged one, "rests," as they say, at the expenses of the other one. There is usually good understanding among the women of such a union, and the children of one and the other enjoy the same rights in the familial constellation.

586 [182] [581] An index of the social disorganization of the present-day Guaraní, with the exception of the Mbüá, is the lack of stability of the conjugal unions. Among the Ñandéva the initiative for the separation almost always comes from the man, who either leaves the children with the woman, or -- "according to the fight," in the words of João Samuel, Ñandéva from Bananal -- sends the woman away and lives with the children. At Araribá, where I found women with three or four successive husbands, the official in charge of the post did not remember one case, in almost twenty years, in which the woman had decided to leave the husband. In other villages, too, it is observed that the woman tries to conform to the circumstances, in order not to have the burden of later supporting the offspring alone. Adultery, both on the part of the man and the woman, is one of the causes of divorce. At Araribá a married Indian woman, seduced by a

● 837 [586]

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black or mulatto who lived at the post, told me that, after resisting for a while, she yielded to seduction because she liked him. The woman's stepfather took a knife to kill the man, perhaps in obedience to the caboclo pattern.

Given the precariousness of the matrimonial unions, marriage does not today constitute a factor of incisive importance in the lives of many Kayová. At Dourados, where there were even men who changed women from one chicha to another, the situation is tending to improve through the influence of the Christian mission that works among the Indians of the post. In the separation of a Kayová couple, the children, whether male or female, usually stay with the mother, as well as the house and the clearing, even though made by the husband. There are cases in which a mother, falling in love with another man, starts to mistreat the children, who constitute a kind of obstacle, inasmuch as the man does not like to take a woman with the children of someone else. It is to be noted in passing that mothers surpass the fathers in rigor in punishing the children. Fights between spouses are caused by alcoholism, jealousy, and the economic incapacity of the /79/ husband. Kayová women not infrequently decide to leave a lazy husband; when a man leaves the woman, it is generally because he has fallen in love with another.

It is clear that such a state of affairs will not fail to have profound repercussions in the existence of the whole community, since the Guaraní social structure is essentially based on the relations that govern family life. The rhythm of social disorganization is a function of the sphacelation of the primitive great-family. And in many groups of the present day the great-family can no longer exist because of the simple fact that the existence of the elementary family itself is precarious. By its very nature the great-family requires stability of the matrimonial bonds; otherwise, there is not a member large enough to constitute it, particularly since, in the case of divorce, the children -- especially among the Kayová -- preferably stay with the mother, the great-family, on the other hand, being based on the exercise of paternal authority. The example of one of the few great-families that has

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584 the initiative falling upon the mother of the girl. They told me
178 that, even when the boy and the girl did not greatly want to marry or even in the case where they were opposed to it, they were forced to satisfy the mothers' wishes. Nowadays the young man first consults the girl about the subject. Once the girl's consent has been obtained, he goes to deal with her father. If the latter consents to it, the marriage ordinarily is realized, but there are also cases in which the young man likewise applied to
585 the girl's mother. The marriage itself does not necessarily need to constitute an occurrence of great repercussion, but many times the brother or the father of the young man organizes a dance feast for the couple; and on this occasion the couple is counseled
[431] by some of the old men in the group. It is not necessary to give presents to the new couple, but the father or any other person
178 may give articles of food, etc. During the earlier period about
591 which I have spoken above, it was customary for the newlyweds to go to live in the girl's house. At that time the Cayuá lived almost exclusively in common houses, so that the couple never left the house of the girl's family. Nowadays a large percentage of the Cayuá own private houses, and if the young man, upon being married, has not yet built a house for himself and his wife, the couple, in theory, lives with the wife's family. Today, however, the cases in which the couple has gone to live in the house of the boy's family are frequent.

595 Monogamy constitutes the general manner of marriage among the present-day Cayuá, although there are no laws against polygamy. I heard mention of only a single case in which one of the men, before the death of his first wife, lived at the same time with another one, by whom he likewise had children. Since the death of the first one, the other one is considered the
836 wife of this man and lives with him. Promiscuity is not common,
837 and it is affirmed that the child of a frivolous woman will be very much a homebody, being obliged not to go into the forest because the jaguars would manage to devour him.